

Camel caper raises cash

A TOUR of a family Christmas play helped to raise more than £1,000 for the appeal to transform the inside of St Jude's Church, Southsea.

Top Cat Theatre Company performed *Melchior's Magical Mystery Quest* to audiences in Fratton, Cowplain, Farlington, Paulsgrove, Botley, Emsworth, Hayling Island and Southsea during December.

The hour-long play told the story of the journey of the three wise men to the nativity scene – with their camel Desmond. Children from local schools were invited to many of the performances. A DVD of the play will shortly be available - see www.topcattheatre.com for details.



The angel Gabriel (Charis Froggatt) shows Melchior (Roger Sutton) the wonder of the universe in *Melchior's Magical Mystery Quest*

Church aiming to bless community

IT'S a great example of how Kairos thinking can influence how we use our church buildings.

Work should start this year re-ordering St Jude's Church in Southsea. The £2.4m project includes plans for a new main entrance, the creation of community rooms and the lifting of the worship area to the first floor.

Worshippers have already raised £750,000 of the cash needed, through sacrificial giving, fundraising and grants.

That should pay for the first phase of the project, which involves creating a stunning new glass-fronted entrance to the church opposite the end of the Palmerston Road shopping precinct.

Passers-by will be able to pop into the foyer during the day to drink coffee, view exhibitions or pray in a new chapel – the area that is the present chancel. A new kitchen, new offices and new toilets will mean better facilities for church and community groups.

The church's garden will be opened up to the public. And a second main door to the north will allow wedding cars and funeral hearses to be driven up to a church entrance away from the busy road.

The second phase of the



A computer image showing what the new entrance at St Jude's might look like at the corner of Kent Road and Grove Road South – opposite the end of Palmerston Road precinct

work involves creating a suite of multi-purpose rooms on the ground floor. They will be used by local community and church groups for meetings, presentations and performances.

And a new first floor inside the 156-year-old church will house a new worship area. Worshippers will sit in a semi-circle for services, facing a new platform and altar at the west end of the building.

The vicar, the Rev Mike Duff, said: "Although our church building is at the heart of Southsea, it often looks closed and unwelcoming.

"These exciting and ambi-

tious plans mean people will be able to come in throughout the day and spend time in quiet in our chapel, benefit from the garden or use a wide range of modern facilities for their own meetings.

"We really want to bless our community in Southsea, both spiritually and physically, and this project will help us to do that even more effectively. It ties in with both the bishop's Kairos: Buildings initiative, and also with the vision that God has given to us as a church family.

"The re-ordering will also provide us with a much better area for worship and for chil-



dren's groups. Our current long, thin worship area, with rooms to either side, can make it hard for visitors or regular worshippers to feel part of what is going on at the front."

The plans, drawn up by architect Nick Lee Evans, have been enthusiastically backed by our Diocesan Advisory Committee for the care of churches (DAC). City councillors will now be asked to give planning permission for the project.

Work started before Christmas on some preliminary repairs to the external stonework. This completes the external repairs, which were started a few years ago with work to the tower and spire.

The first phase of the internal re-ordering should start by the middle of the year. Worshippers and community groups will continue to use the building while this work takes place. The second phase will follow once the money has been raised.

Anyone who would like more information about the project can contact the parish office on 023-9275 0442 or office@stjudes-southsea.org.uk, or see the parish website: www.stjudes-southsea.org.uk.

Deprivation statistics are now available

DID you know that parts of Hayling Island, Newport, Ryde and Ventnor are thought to be as deprived as some of the inner-city parts of our diocese?

Were you aware that employment deprivation is high in Sandown Bay, or that health has improved significantly in Paulsgrove?

These statistics are contained within new Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), which are used by the government and others – including the Church Urban Fund – to assess need and allocate resources around England. This set of data was produced in December 2007.

They are particularly useful for parishes that would like to apply for grants and have to prove that there is sufficient need in their locality. A full set of IMD statistics from 2004 was included in the Kairos packs distributed in 2005.

These updated figures are now available from our social responsibility adviser, Canon Nick Ralph. Each area in our diocese is ranked according to where it stands in the national statistics. The Index of Multiple Deprivation is calculated by putting together statistics on income, employment, health, education, housing, crime and the living environment.

For more information, contact Nick Ralph on 023-9289 9674 or nick.ralph@portsmouth.anglican.org

We helped to make happy Christmas

GENEROUS worshippers helped to make it a record-breaking year for a scheme to provide Christmas presents for needy people.

More than £8,500 was donated in vouchers so that homeless people, asylum seekers and those in women's refuges could buy themselves Christmas gifts. The scheme is run by Churches Homeless Action (CHA).

The vouchers are handed to agencies such as the Haslar Visitors Group, the Roberts Centre and the Portsmouth Foyer, who then distribute the vouchers among their clients. Some pool their vouchers so they can hold a Christmas party. Others buy themselves presents they wouldn't otherwise receive.

Canon Bob White, from CHA, said: "This year we were overwhelmed by the generosity shown. Thank you so much to all who contributed in any way."